

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01 DRC-01

/138 W

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O 032010Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5790

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE

CINCSO IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 4506

CINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, HO, ES

SUBJ: HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR NEGOTIATIONS

REF: STATE 233809

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE COUNTRY TEAM BELIEVES THAT CHIEF OF STATE LOPEZ, THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND ALL SIGNIFICANT FORCES IN HONDURAS DESIRE TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH EL SALVADOR ON FRONTIER DEMARCATION AND ON OTHER MATTERS BEING CONSIDERED IN THE BILATERAL TALKS. HOWEVER, THE SETTLEMENT OF THE FRONTIER QUESTION IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO THE HONDURANS AND THERE CAN BE NO OVERALL AGREEMENT WITHOUT THAT ESSENTIAL ELEMENT. THE GOH WANTS A RESOLUTION OF THE BORDER  
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QUESTION, BUT CANNOT ACCEPT UNJUSTIFIED SALVADORAN

TERRITORIAL DEMANDS WITHOUT RISK OF AN INTERNAL EXPLOSION. THE HONDURANS BELIEVE THAT MOLINA IS IN A SHAKY POLITICAL POSITION AND THAT HIS DENUNCIATION OF THE BOGOTA PACT WAS A REACTION TO THOSE INTERNAL PRESSURES. THE DENUNCIATION OF THE PACT HAS INCREASED HONDURAN SUSPICIONS THAT EL SALVADOR HAS NO INTENTION OF REACHING A FRONTIER AGREEMENT AND THAT, THEREFORE, THE PROSPECTS FOR SETTLEMENT HAVE RECEDED INTO THE INDEFINITE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE COUNTRY TEAM HAS ATTEMPTED TO MAKE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE NATURE AND VIEWS OF THE VARIOUS HONDURAN FORCES CONCERNED WITH THE EL SALVADOR NEGOTIATIONS. THERE IS NO DOUBT ON THE PART OF ANY GROUP THAT THE CENTRAL QUESTION IS THE DEMARCATION OF THE FRONTIER, AND THAT THE OTHER SEVEN POINTS OF THE EIGHT POINT AGENDA ARE RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT. ALL POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GROUPS ARE UNITED, ALBEIT INFORMALLY, BEHIND THE POSITION THAT THERE MUST BE AN EQUITABLE FRONTIER SETTLEMENT OR THERE SHOULD BE NO AGREEMENT OF ANY TYPE.

2. CLEARLY THE MAJOR SOURCE OF POWER IN HONDURAS HAS BEEN AND IS THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR, UNIONS, CAMPESINO ORGANIZATIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES DO NOT INFLUENCE GOVERNMENTAL DECISIONS BUT RATHER THAT, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE MILITARY HIERARCHY DECIDES HONDURAS' OVERALL COURSE OF ACTION BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. IN THAT REGARD, THE MILITARY AT SENIOR AND MIDDLE LEVELS HAVE OFTEN EXPRESSED THEIR DESIRE TO ARRIVE AT A SETTLEMENT OF THE BORDER MATTER THAT IS JUST AND EQUITABLE. THE MATTERS OF DIPLOMATIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS, PARTICIPATION IN THE CACM, OPENING OF THE HIGHWAY AND OTHER MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE NEVER CAUSED THE MILITARY SERIOUS CONCERN. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IS OPPOSED TO LOPEZ' HANDLING OF THE NEGOTIATIONS OR THAT HE IS BEING PRESSURED BY ANY GROUP WITHIN THE MILITARY IN REGARD TO THE TALKS. IN FACT, IT APPEARS HE IS RECEIVING THEIR FULL SUPPORT AND WOULD BE IN NO DANGER OF LOSING CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT SUPPORT UNLESS IT SEEMS THAT HE IS GIVING IN TO UNJUSTIFIED SALVADORAN TERRITORIAL DEMANDS.

3. OTHER SECTORS ARE IN FAVOR OF A SETTLEMENT PER SE EVEN THOUGH CERTAIN ELEMENTS IN THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR WOULD, FOR THEIR OWN REASONS, LIKE TO SEE LOPEZ EMBARRASSED BY THE NEGOTIATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE LIBERAL AND THE NATIONALIST PARTIES HAVE

BEEN EFFECTIVELY EXCLUDED FROM GOVERNMENT SINCE THE DECEMBER 4, 1972 COUP AND SOME INDIVIDUALS IN THE PARTIES SUCH AS NATIONALIST LEADER RICARDO ZUNIGA AND LIBERAL LEADER CARLOS ROBERTO REINA PURPORT TO FEEL THAT THE ACCEPTANCE OF AN UNJUST OR SEEMINGLY UNJUST RESOLUTION OF THE FRONTIER QUESTION BY LOPEZ WOULD SO DISTURB THE MILITARY THAT THE POLITICAL PARTIES WOULD HAVE A CHANCE FOR RETURN TO POWER.

4. PROBABLY A MAJOR PORTION OF THE ARAB BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS OPPOSED TO HONDURAN REPARTICIPATION IN CACM. THESE ELEMENTS MAINTAIN SMALL AND MOSTLY INEFFICIENT INDUSTRIES, AND PREFER A CAPTIVE MARKET WHERE THEY CAN MAXIMIZE PROFITS WITHOUT COMPETITION. WEALTHY ARABS IN TIMBER, TEXTILES AND MATCH MANUFACTURING ARE INVOLVED, AND THEIR ATTITUDES ARE SO RETROGRADE THAT THEY EVEN OPPOSED HONDURAS' RECENTLY NEGOTIATED TRADE BILATERALS. (HOWEVER, TWO ARABS, LUIS KAFIE IN TRADE, AND MIKE FACUSSE IN CHEMICALS AND FOOD MANUFACTURING, ARE AMONG THE COUNTRY'S STRONGEST ADVOCATES FOR CACM.) AGAIN, IT MUST BE STRESSED THAT NEITHER THE POLITICAL PARTIES NOR PRIVATE SECTOR OPPONENTS OF LOPEZ WHO MIGHT HOPE FOR A GAIN FROM THE FAILURE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE OPPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO A SETTLEMENT OF THE FRONTIER QUESTION AND OTHER OUTSTANDING ISSUES NOR ARE THEY INFLUENCING THE CONDUCT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

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INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

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CINCSO FOR POLAD

5. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF EL CRONISTA AND A FEW OLDER GENERATION JURISTS AND GEOGRAPHERS OF THE MOST RIGID PERSUASION (FELIX CANALES SALAZAR), WHO HAVE CONDUCTED A CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE TALKS, THE MEDIA HAVE BEEN GENERALLY RESPONSIBLE IN REPORTING. HOWEVER, THE MEDIA IN COMPANY WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES, HAVE RECENTLY COMPLAINED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ADEQUATELY DESCRIBING WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. IN THAT REGARD, THE GOVERNMENT HAD ONLY BEEN PUBLISHING PERIODIC COMMUNIQUES INDICATING THAT THE TALKS WERE BEING CARRIED OUT AND ISSUED STATEMENTS THT THE GOVERNMENT WAS "MODERATELY OPTIMISTIC." THE GOVERNMENT CALLED THE POLITICAL PARTIES, UNIONS AND PRIVATE SECTOR INTO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS DURING MID-NOVEMBER TO EXPLAIN MORE FULLY WHAT WAS HAPPENING AND THEREBY MUTED CRITICISM.  
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6. THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS LEGAL ADVISORS ARE CONVINCED THAT THE HONDURAN JURIDICAL CASE CONCERNING THE FRONTIER WOULD BE SUPPORTED IN THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE OR IN OTHER POSSIBLE ARBITRAL BODIES. THE GOVERNMENT AND ALL SIGNIFICANT SECTORS OF SOCIETY RECOGNIZE THAT EL SALVADOR FEARS ANY FORM OF ARBITRAL ACTION BECAUSE OF ITS SHAKY JURIDICAL POSITION IN SUCH A PROCESS. THEREFORE, THEY WERE NOT SO MUCH SURPRISED BY THE GOES DENUNCIATION OF THE BOGOTA PACT AS CONCERNED BY WHAT THEY SEE AS A HASTY AND HARMFUL ACTION. THEY VIEW IT AS AN UNFORTUNATE SYMBOLIC ACT OF REJECTING ONE OF THE TREATIES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM EMBODYING THE ACCEPTED PRECEPTS CONCERNING THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES. HONDURANS HAVE POINTED OUT IRONICALLY THAT THE SALVADORANS HAVE ONLY DISCOVERED AT THIS POINT AFTER MANY YEARS THAT THEIR CONSTITUTION AND THE BOGOTA PACT ARE INCOMPATIBLE BECAUSE ARBITRATION UNDER THE PACT COULD RESULT IN AN AWARD THAT WOULD VIOLATE THE TERRITORIAL PROVISIONS OF THE SALVADORAN CONSTITUTION. THE GOH OF COURSE REJECTS THE VIEW THAT THE "CONSTITUTIONAL IRREDUCIBILITY" OF SALVADORAN LAND CONSTITUTES A BARRIER TO NEGOTIATION, SINCE THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT A DEFINITION OF

UNDEFINED TERRITORY AMOUNTS TO A REDUCTION OR INCREASE OF THE SAME. RENUNCIATION HAS ALSO REINFORCED THE BELIEF THAT THE SALVADORANS ARE UNWILLING TO REACH A REASONABLE SETTLEMENT.

7. TO SUM UP, THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL SECTORS THAT OPPOSE RESOLUTION OF THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, BUT ALL SECTORS VIEW THE FRONTIER QUESTION AS THE VITAL ELEMENT IN AN AGREEMENT. THE GOH IS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE THE FRONTIER QUESTION BUT WOULD BE UNABLE TO GIVE IN TO EXCESSIVE SALVADORAN TERRITORIAL DEMANDS WITHOUT PROVOKING AN INTERNAL EXPLOSION. THE GOH BELIEVES THAT AT THIS POINT THE ONLY METHOD OF RESOLVING THE FRONTIER ISSUE OUTSIDE OF BILATERAL TALKS IS TO SUBMIT IT TO ARBITRATION, BUT RECOGNIZES THAT THE GOES REFUSES TO ACCEPT SUCH A POLICY. THEREFORE, THE PROSPECT IS FOR A TERMINATION OF THE BILATERAL TALKS WITHOUT AGREEMENT AND A RETURN TO "SQUARE ONE." SUCH A RESULT WILL NOT CAUSE SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL DISCONTENT, BUT WILL DEEPEN HONDURAN SUSPICIONS OF EL SALVADOR AND DELAY A CONFIDENTIAL

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POSSIBLE SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD.

8. CONCERNING PARA 2 OF REFTTEL. THE VIEW OF IMPORTANT SECTORS OF HONDURAN SOCIETY IS THAT EL SALVADOR IS ESSENTIALLY AN OLIGARCHY COMPOSED OF A RELATIVELY FEW FAMILIES WHO CONTROL THE COUNTRY AND POSSESS ITS WEALTH. THEY SEE THE SALVADORAN POLITICAL PROCESS AS A STRUGGLE FOR POWER BETWEEN POLYCLASS POLITICAL FORCES. THE HONDURAN CABINET FURTHER IS AWARE THAT SALVADOR (IN COMMON WITH NICARAGUA AND GUATEMALA) IS APPREHENSIVE AND DISPLEASED WITH THE DEVELOPMENTAL AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRESENT GOH. IN SUCH A SITUATION, THE SALVADORAN MILITARY IS SEEN AS A PREATORIAN GUARD WHICH EXISTS TO PROTECT THE WEALTH OF THE OLIGARCHY AND TO REPRESS SOCIAL AGITATION AGAINST THE RIGID SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE. THE HONDURANS ALSO CITE LATEST ABORTIVE GOLPE AS EVIDENCE THAT SALVADORAN MILITARY, AS OPPOSED TO HONDURAN OFFICER CORPS, IS NOT UNITARY. THEY CONSIDER THAT POWERFUL RIVAL OFFICERS AND CLIQUES ARE IN COMPETITION FOR POWER, AND THAT THIS BLOCKS PRESIDENTIAL FREEDOM OF DECISION.

9. IN THAT REGARD, THEY THINK THAT MOLINA IS IN A RELATIVELY DIFFICULT POSITION AT THE PRESENT TIME AND THAT HIS ABRUPT ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DENUNCIATION OF THE BOGOTA PACT WAS AN ATTEMPT TO SHORE HIMSELF UP. BECAUSE OF THE PERIODIC INTERNAL SALVADORAN POWER STRUGGLES, THE REPRESSIVE SOCIAL SITUATION AND AN INCREASING POPULATION, THE HONDURANS TEND TO FEAR THAT AT SOME FUTURE TIME THE SALVADORANS MIGHT AGAIN RESORT TO

AGRESSIVE ACTION AS THEY DID IN 1969 TO EASE THOSE INTERNAL  
PRESSURES.  
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## Message Attributes

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